



## State Department Introduces Expanded Online Presence Review for H-1B Applicants: What Travelers Should Know

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Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of State implemented changes to vetting protocols for F, M, and J visa applicants, requiring them to set their accounts to public, and directing consular officers to review the online presence of applicants in advance of issuing visas. On December 3, 2025, the U.S. Department of State announced an expansion of this enhanced screening and vetting procedure, indicating that, as of December 15, 2025, H-1B visa applicants and their H-4 dependents will be subject to the same online presence review during the visa application process. As a result, some consular posts are changing their processes to accommodate this more extensive vetting.

Per this new guidance, officers may examine public posts, comments, photos, affiliations, and other online content across social media platforms and websites, including (but not limited to) X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Reddit, Pinterest, etc. Visa applicants with employment-related social media accounts (e.g., LinkedIn) can expect their professional profiles to be reviewed for consistency and possible immigration fraud or misrepresentation against petition details, including (but not limited to) job title, employer name, dates of employment, job duties, and unauthorized employment in the United States. Finally, any “indicators of concern,” including “hostility toward the citizens, culture, government, institutions, or founding principles of the United States; of advocacy for, aid, or support for designated foreign terrorists and other threats to U.S. national security; or of support for unlawful antisemitic harassment or violence,” or information revealing that someone may be positioned to potentially steal technical information or exploit U.S. research, or who has a history of political activism likely to continue in the United States may be refused the visa or requested to attend a follow-up interview. It is also possible further screenings will be initiated to determine whether the applicant has previously complied with U.S. law and nonimmigrant status requirements.

Visa appointments in several countries have already been affected, with interview cancellations and delays of several months or longer occurring in India, Ireland, and Vietnam as consulates work to integrate this enhanced review requirement into their screening process. At this time, it is not yet clear whether other U.S. consular posts worldwide will take similar action by canceling or rescheduling appointments to accommodate the new procedures.

Because of this uncertainty, H-1B nonimmigrants planning for international travel and their employers should be aware of the possibility of significant delays or disruptions in consular processing. We strongly recommend the following:

- **Reconsider upcoming travel if possible, and plan for flexibility** in travel dates and employment start timelines.
- **Monitor appointment schedules closely**, as consular posts may update or change them on short notice.
- **Ensure online presence information is consistent, accurate, and complete**, as it may be reviewed as part of the visa application process.
- **Consult our office** before confirming international travel if an H-1B visa appointment is part of the itinerary.

As the State Department provides further clarification and consulates adjust their procedures, we will continue to monitor developments and update our clients accordingly. If you have questions about how this new review process may affect your case, please contact our office for guidance.

*\*Disclaimer: This information is presented for the purposes of general education and does not constitute legal advice. For advice about a specific case, please consult legal counsel.*